

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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USUN NEW YORK 690

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 3115

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, UN, CE

SUBJ: WELLS/PETREE MISSION - DISCUSSION OF POLITICAL TOPICS
WITH SRI LANKAN OFFICIALS

1. IN THREE HOURS OF MEETINGS AUGUST 24 WITH MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS A.C.S. HAMEED AND SEVERAL OTHER MINISTRY
OFFICIALS, DISCUSSION OF GENERAL POLITICAL QUESTIONS CENTERED
ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND ON AFRICA. GSL OFFICIALS WERE GENUINELY
INTERESTED IN PROBLEMS AND EXPRESSED BROAD SUPPORT FOR US
EFFORTS.

2. MIDDLE EAST: HAMEED EXPRESSED CONVICTION THAT PRESIDENT
CARTER CAN MAKE SPECTACULAR CONTRIBUTION TO FINAL SOLUTION TO
PROBLEM. NO OTHER COUNTRY CAN SOLVE IT. THE MIDDLE EAST
SITUATION, HE SAID, IS EXPLOSIVE AND NO AMOUNT OF DEBATING OR
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OF PASSING RESOLUTIONS IN THE UN WILL BRING ABOUT SUBSTANTIAL
RESULTS. PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE US MUST PROVIDE THE CRITICALLY
NEEDED LEADERSHIP. HAMEED AND OTHER OFFICIALS REFERRED TO
RECENT CABLE FROM DAMASCUS REPORTING SYRIA'S CALL FOR AN
EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE NON-ALIGNED EXECUTIVE GROUP TO
DISCUSS MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM. MEETING IS SET FOR SEPT. 27
IN NEW YORK. GSL OFFICIAL SAID WE NO DOUBT SHOULD EXPECT SOME

STRIDENT RHETORIC ON MIDDLE EAST DURING 32ND UNGA, BUT HE URGED THAT US NOT PERMIT THIS TO DETER CONTINUED INTENSIVE PEACE EFFORT.

3. US SIDE NOTED THAT INITIATIVES ON THE MIDDLE EAST TAKEN BY US SINCE JANUARY 1977 UNDERSCORE THE IMPORTANT THAT US PLACES ON SOLVING MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM, AND THAT PRESIDENT CARTER IS PROVIDING THE LEADERSHIP. WE MAY BE AT AN HISTORICAL JUNCTURE WHERE ALL PARTIES RECOGNIZE THE NECESSITY TO MOVE TOWARD A SOLUTION. PETREE STRESSED THAT PARTIES THEMSELVES HAVE TO NEGOTIATE AN AGREEMENT THAT THEY CAN LIVE WITH, AND THAT ALL PARTIES MUST BE REPRESENTED IN THE BARGAINING PROCESS. THE US GOAL IS TO GET ALL OF THE PARTIES TO GENEVA WHERE THEY CAN NEGOTIATE THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS. THE US, HE SAID, IS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC THAT AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED IN GENEVA AND THAT CONFRONTATION IN COMMITTEE IV IN THE UN CAN BE AVOIDED.

4. SOUTHERN AFRICA: TO A QUESTION WHETHER US POLICY TOWARD SOUTHERN AFRICA HAS CHANGED, PETREE NOTED THAT POLICY OBVIOUSLY HAS BEEN IN A PROCESS OF CHANGE. HE DESCRIBED POSSIBILITIES THAT HAVE BEEN OPENED UNDER CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO BUILD CONFIDENCE BETWEEN WESTERN AND AFRICAN NATIONS. HE OUTLINED IN GENERAL TERMS THE PRESENT STATUS OF US/WESTERN EFFORTS TOWARD SETTLEMENT OF NAMIBIA, ZIMBABWE, AND SOUTH AFRICAN PROBLEMS. HAMEED AND OTHERS STATED THAT AFRICANS AND NON-ALIGNED

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CLEARLY BELIEVE IN SERIOUSNESS OF US EFFORT AND WISH IT WELL.

5. HORN OF AFRICA: GSL OFFICIALS EXHIBITED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN THE SOMALIA-ETHIOPIA CONFRONTATION, SAYING INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THEM IS VERY SKETCHY. THEY SAID THE UNDERSTOOD THE ARABS ARE PUSHING SOMALIA TO DISMEMBER ETHIOPIA, AND THERE WERE QUESTIONS REGARDING SOVIET AND PRC POSITIONS IN SOMALIA AND US OFFER OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE. WRIGGINS

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